New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1948

Volume IX, Number 26 • Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* • Week of December 13, 1948

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"Red Gloves"

"Anne of the Thousand Days"

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NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK MIRROR
NEW YORK SUN
NEW YORK STAR
NEW YORK POST

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"Anne of the Thousand Days"

Daily Mirror

DECEMBER 9, 1948

'Anne of Thousand Days' A Sure Hit at Shubert

By ROBERT COLEMAN

The Playwrights' Company and Leland Hayward have a huge hit on their hands this morning. Titled "Anne of the Thousand Days," it is from the pen of Maxwell Anderson, and has Rex Harrison and Joyce Redman in the leading roles. You will find it at the Shubert Theatre.

Anderson always has something important to say, and usually says it exceptionally well. In this case, he is concerned with that period in English history when Henry VIII casts off religious ties with Rome, seizes the wealth of the Church and executes all who stand in the way of his marriage to Anne Boleyn.

Now don't get the idea that this is another dull chronicle play. Far from it. It is a fascinating and absorbing study of the conflict of emotion and will between the headstrong Henry and his fiery Queen. These characters are beautifully and sensually etched. They completely dominate, as they should, the script.

Though the unfortunate Anne, torn from the arms of her lover, Northumberland, by Henry, spent a thousand tempestuous days with that monarch, on only one did she achieve true happiness, did she whole-heartedly give herself to her royal mate. Then Henry, disappointed by Anne's inability to give him a male heir, cast his roving eyes on Jane Seymour, offered Anne death or exile. Anne chose the former, to cement the succession to the throne for her daughter, Elizabeth, and to retain her self-respect and dignity.

Harrison's portrait of Henry is a masterpiece. It is painted with more subtlety and feeling, less grossness and greasepaint, than the customary one. It is richly spoken, meticulously detailed and tremendously effective.

Miss Redman's Anne is a fitting companion piece. Spirited, passionate, utterly feminine, it is an enchanting picture for your memory book.

Percy Waram's Cardinal Wolsey, John Williams' Duke of Norfolk, Russell Gaige's Sir Thomas More and Harry Irvine's Bishop Fisher are right and authoritative. Wendell K. Phillips' Thomas Cromwell seemed weak by comparison. Charles Francis, Allan Stevenson, John Merivale, Robert Duke, Viola Keats and George Collier are good in lesser roles.

The direction by H. C. Potter is admirable. It gives the script the drive it demands, but also manages to catch the modulations and nuances that give it distinction. Salutes also are due the settings by Jo Mielziner and the costumes by Motley.

Anderson is our only playwright who almost consistently employs blank verse with skill, sureness and eloquence. On previous occasions he has been charged with verbosity, with falling in love with speech. This accusation will not stand up in the present instance. "Anne of the Thousand Days" wastes no words, is compactly drawn and is intensely dramatic.

We recommend it to all seeking a literate, rewarding and stirring evening in the theatre. It should be a leading candidate for Pulitzer and Critics' Circle awards.

'ANNE OF THE THOUSAND DAYS.'

ANNE OF THE THOUSAND DAYS, a play in two acts, by Maxwell Anderson, with music by Lehman Engel. Staged by H. C. Potter; setting and lighting by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Motley; presented by the Playwrights Company and Leland Hayward. At the Shubert Theatre.

Anne Boleyn	Joyce Redman
Henry	Rex Harrison
Cardinal Wolsey	Percy Waram
Thomas Boleyn	Charles Francis
Servant	Ludlow Maury
Henry Norris	Allan Stevenson
Mark Smeaton	John Merivale
Duke of Norfolk	John Williams
Percy, Earl of Northumberland	Robert Duke
Elizabeth Boleyn	Viola Keats
Serving Woman	Kathleen Bolton
Servant	Cecil Clovelly
Mary Boleyn	Louise Platt
Madge Shelton	Margaret Garland
Jane Seymour	Monica Lang
Sir Thomas More	Russell Gaige
Thomas Cromwell	Wendell K. Phillips
Bishop Fisher	Harry Irvine
Prior Houghton	Cecil Clovelly
Messenger	Harry Selby
Bailiff	Fred Ayres Cotton
Bailiff	Harold McGee
Clerk	Terence Anderson
Singers:	
Richard Leone, Frank Myers, Donald Conrad	
Musicians:	
Harold McGee, Malcolm Wells, Charles Ellis	

Synopsis: The play, in two acts, takes place in England between the years 1528 and 1536.

DAILY NEWS

DECEMBER 9, 1948

Harrison and Redman Splendid In a Stirring Historical Drama

By JOHN CHAPMAN

Once again Maxwell Anderson has turned for plot and inspiration to the loves of kings and queens, and in "Anne of the Thousand Days" he has another sonorous, robust and panoplied drama. It was presented at the Shubert Theatre last evening, and in it Rex Harrison and Joyce Redman are giving mettlesome performances. Costume drama is a satisfying form of theatre, and "Anne" is, to me, a thoroughly satisfying sample of this art form.

Mr. Harrison is giving a handsome, humorous and lusty performance as that Tudor terror, Henry the Eighth, and Mr. Anderson has written boldly of his amours in almost Winsor (Kathleen) style. Miss Redman, as Anne Boleyn, matches Mr. Harrison scene for scene and is an extraordinarily resourceful and attractive young actress.

The historians seem to have marked Anne down as a weak and petty wench whose only show of strength was her insistence that Henry divorce Queen Catherine and marry her. Moreover, they think there must have been something to those charges of adultery, considering the exhaustiveness of the trial and the number and quality of the judges who found her guilty.

Another Viewpoint.

But, by now, Mr. Anderson is something of a historian, too, and his Anne Boleyn is another sort of person. She is stubborn, of course, and does hold out for marriage—but she is no flibbertigibbet. She may like to dance with the boys at Windsor Castle, but she does have the dignity of a royal queen. She also fights, literally to the death, for the right of inheritance to the throne of her daughter, Elizabeth.

Anne, Mr. Anderson believes, was faithful to Henry. When Jane Seymour became his new light of love she could have taken an easy way out—exile with her daughter in Antwerp, and an annulment. But she would not give up her queendom and her baby's right to succession and for this the adultery charges were framed and she was beheaded.

Miss Redman's Anne is a woman of passion and courage. Mr. Harrison's Henry is a king of passion and willfulness, but not as gross and cunning as Charles Laughton made him. He is a handsome monarch who, in spite of his steady pursuit of happiness, finds time to ponder his position and take an ironic view of it. Mr. Harrison's performance has scope and character, and I do not see how it could be bettered.

An Excellent Company.

The drama of the thousand days in which Anne and Henry were together is played before one simple set by Jo Mielziner. It is magnificently costumed by Motley and it has incidental music and songs—songs Henry is supposed to have written while wooing—by Lehman Engel.

There are excellent performances by Percy Waram as Wolsey, Charles Francis as Boleyn, Viola Keats as Anne's mother, Wendell K. Phillips as Thomas Cromwell, John Merivale as one of Anne's supposed lovers and others of a sizeable company.

Once again Mr. Anderson is writing in the grand manner—but it never is too grand. His words and cadences are resounding but not overbearing; his scenes are short and dramatically effective; he makes use of soliloquies with great skill. "Anne" is much more than a historical pageant; it is profoundly compassionate drama about two historical people, and H. C. Potter has staged it effectively.

The New York Times

DECEMBER 9, 1948

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

An old hand at scribbling about kings and queens, Maxwell Anderson has written one of his most stirring dramas, "Anne of the Thousand Days," which opened at the Sam S. Shubert last evening. His Anne is Anne Boleyn, second wife to that merry but blood-stained monarch, Henry VIII. To play the part, Mr. Anderson has been ingenious enough to bring Joyce Redman from England, and he has persuaded Rex Harrison to come from Hollywood to play the king.

Nothing Mr. Anderson has transmuted out of the history books is more creative than his choice of players. For Miss Redman, fiery, imperious and valiant, gives a magnificent performance as Anne. And Mr. Harrison's Henry is evenly mated—braggart, with a thread of sincerity and honest confusion running through it. As usual Mr. Anderson has pitched his drama high. His actors and associates have the strength and style to keep it on that level.

* * *

Possibly history wrote the story of Anne and Henry to order for Mr. Anderson's bravura purposes. He begins with Henry's infatuation for Anne when she had given her heart to the young Earl of Northumberland. Here and there he may have made history wiser than it had intended to be, an agreeable folly he learned from Shakespeare. But in the main this is the grand and horrifying saga of two persons of fierce pride who made the world pay for their love—made innocent people suffer, tore open the states of Europe, fought the church, drove good men to the executioner's axe and stirred hatred into love so that neither one could be separated from the other. There is no more fascinating or ghastly tale in the annals of the kings.

* * *

In the second act "Anne of the Thousand Days" does lose its royal momentum. The scheme of short scenes breaks the rhythm, and Mr. Anderson's soliloquies have an uncertain grounding as the drama runs down toward Anne's heartless death. Like Shakespeare again, he cannot always master his material. But this comment is offered here merely for the record. For the drama as a whole is a passionate chronicle of heroic people who move in a barbaric world of cynicism, indulgence and promethean audacity. Mr. Anderson has the size to write about them in big strokes with ostentatious imagery. He is not afraid of a swagger phrase; he dotes on cultured bawdry. No one else has the strength to write on this theatrical level and to use the stage with such abandon.

Fortunately the actors have as much strength as he has, and also breath enough to speak his rolling lines. Under H. C. Potter's direction, the production and the performance are superb. Motley's costumes are masterpieces. Although Jo Mielziner's unit set is not one of his great creations, it gives the actors room enough for the drama and lights them vividly. Lehman Engel has contributed some innocent songs that are touching in contrast with the sordid tumult of the story.

The tone of the performance is dramatic on various levels—the cruel worldliness of Percy Waram's Wolsey, the sophistication of John Williams' Norfolk, the rude ardor of Robert Duke's Northumberland, the nerveless treachery of Wendell Phillips' Cromwell, the sycophancy of Charles Francis' father Boleyn, the resolute piety of Russell Gaige and Harry Irvine as dissenters from the king's usurpation of the church.

But Miss Redman and Mr. Harrison are the royal actors in Mr. Anderson's stormy drama. Although Miss Redman is a tiny person, she has the spirit of a queen, and she gives a many-sided, flaming performance. It is hard, calculating, heady and tough as steel.

Mr. Harrison's king triumphs by virtue of his office. But he is an equally vital human being. For Mr. Harrison gives another penetrating performance that conveys the good humor, the boyish charm as well as the coarseness and cruelty of this perplexing monarch. Never were two people better matched than the Anne and Henry in this turbulent drama. Mr. Anderson not only likes to walk with kings and queens; he can also make them keep step with him.

Journal American

DECEMBER 9, 1948

Anderson at His Best And an Elegant Cast

By ROBERT GARLAND

Maxwell Anderson is at his happiest when reshaping historical characters nearer to his heart's desire. As playwright, he failed with George Washington of Valley Forge and Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria-Hungary. But he improved with Peter Stuyvesant of New Amsterdam and Joan of Lorraine. With Elizabeth of England and Mary Queen of Scots he came into his own.

In his more successful reshaped biographies he received no little assistance from star-spangled casts in which Walter Huston and Ingrid Bergman, Lynn Fontanne and Helen Hayes, gave three actorial dimensions to high-flung leading roles. Now, in his reshaping of Anne Boleyn of the thousand days, he has two elegant English importations as his King and Queen.

They give zest, color and authority to the Playwrights' Company's presentation of Leland Hayward's production of Maxwell Anderson's new revamped biography, Rex Harrison and Joyce Redman by names, their touched-up portraits of Henry VIII and his second unhappy queen put "Anne of the Thousand Days" well up with Mr. Anderson's almost historical successes.

Last night, at the Shubert, a notable congregation in which the West Coast came East and functioned with gentility, it looked as if Broadway and Maxwell Anderson have another "should-see" attraction to their credit. Of late, the professional theatre has seldom looked lustier.

Regains Her Head

Lusty's the word for Mr. Anderson's reshaping of the Anne Boleyn biography. His Henry VIII is a lusty King. And, once he gets Sir Thomas' disastrous daughter away from Lord Henry Percy and into his royal enclosures, she becomes his lusty Queen. He loves her because she hates him. She loves him because he hates her. And regal recriminations ensue.

In episodes which are frequently no more than blackouts, the course of the Henry VIII-Anne Boleyn comical-tragical-historical affair runs not smoothly, but inevitably, to the unseen Tower Green. There, as you know, Anne Boleyn lost her head for the long last time. But she gets it back on her shoulders in Mr. Anderson's reshaped version on Shubert Alley.

Not only does she get it back, but she wears it when she returns, bloody but unbowed, to make the King uncomfortable. A ring of gore is round about her neck as Henry VIII looks up. "I'll sometimes see you when we're alone," he tells her. "It's not over yet between us." Then, having no voice with which to answer, Anne fades out and he goes off to meet Jane Saymour.

Although composed in what, typographically, can be displayed as if it were blank verse, "Anne of the Thousand Days" is written with a matter-of-factness that is its most impressive attribute. Even the churchly and anti-churchly interludes sound prosaicly off-hand.

Complex Monarch

As was the case with his Peter, Joan, Elizabeth and Mary, Maxwell Anderson's Henry and Anne are in life-giving actorial hands. Even Hollywood will forgive Rex Harrison on account of his rugged, vital and reasonable King. The product of his environment, he is a diverse, complex and conflicting monarch who lives his life and accepts the odds against him.

Tempestuous, red - blooded, stubborn, Joyce Redman's Anne is a match for Mr. Harrison's Henry. Between the hating and the loving, she's every inch a queen. So reasonable is she that you're sad and sympathetic when she gets the royal brush-off. Even when dismembered, she keeps her head.

Percy Waram is an untraditional Cardinal Wolsey. Robert Duke is an upstanding Percy, Earl of Northumberland. Monica Lang is a believable Jane Seymour. But it's Wendell Phillips' Thomas Cromwell that gives me the greatest minor satisfaction. Jo Mielziner's permanent setting isn't, I fear, too helpful. Lehman Engel furnishes the assisting music. And, if . . .

Well, if Joshua Logan did put the finishing touches to the Bretaigne Windust-H. C. Potter accredited direction, he deserves great credit for his contribution to a good old fashioned piece of good old fashioned theatre. Maxwell Anderson is his biographical reshaping self again in "Anne of the Thousand Days."

New York World-Telegram

DECEMBER 9, 1948

Two Stars Light Up New Anderson Play

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

From what America knows of the work of Rex Harrison and Joyce Redman, neither would seem obvious casting for the leading roles in "Anne of the Thousand Days," the new Maxwell Anderson play. But the two stars are playing Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn with all the precipitous attack and glow the play demands.

Fortunately the play focusses almost entirely on these principals, because the production and the supporting cast do little to lend it the grandeur that the period and the setting want.

Anderson has succeeded excitingly in giving these two people earthiness and size at the same time. Their story is elemental and personal, yet there is always present the sense of enormous pressures and far-reaching effects from everything they do, because they are who they are.

It is the tale of a girl who played for huge stakes and almost won by her courage when she was defeated by circumstances beyond her control. Anne is a woman of many facets, sophisticated and hot-tempered and with all the fire and dignity for a Queen.

She was adored by Henry, who wilfully insisted that in God's answers to his prayers, his every impulse was declared His will. Anne's independence, her shocking refusal to be bullied by a king, won his heart. She was to have his child, and her demand that it be legitimatized led to Henry's break with the Vatican and the start of the Church of England.

Anne's child was a girl, and later her son was born dead. This was enough to make Henry deny her, but here the more important theme is her loss of Henry's love.

It is while Anne is sitting in the Tower waiting to be beheaded that she thinks back over the thousand days with Henry. When first she loathed him and bargained with him, he adored her. Knowing him for a liar and a lecher, she still learned to love him, and for only one day their passions were equally genuine. Then when she was no longer unattainable in spirit and Henry lost hope of an heir, he turned away from her, though she continued to love him while she hated him again.

This is a great love story and Anderson tells it with lustiness and grand excitement.

Harrison is both coarse and compellingly romantic as Henry. His voice is guttural and his gait a royal swagger.

His contented self-satisfaction is a rarely disturbed state of mind, and he projects a convincing balance of monarchial compulsion and masculine wilfulness.

Miss Redman plays with rare beauty what is a highly complex role. For all her physical slightness, she projects a woman of great passions and stirring dignity as she clings to honor against unprincipaled expedience. She burns with desires and convictions, yet always has an aura of hopelessness which culminates in the terrible vision of her execution.

NEW YORK STAR

December 10, 1948

by John Lardner

Mr. Anderson in a Tudor Mood

Maxwell Anderson is happiest and most fluent when writing of Tudor times in the manner of a Tudor playwright, from which it follows that *Anne of the Thousand Days*, his new play about the love of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, which opened Wednesday at the Shubert, is a specimen of Mr. Anderson's work at its best and a highly useful addition to the season of 1948-49.

The times of the seventh and eighth Henrys, of Mary, Edward, and Elizabeth, were high, rich times. They produced a high, rich style of writing. Under the influence of that style, contemplating the complex but spacious royal characters who interest him so strongly, the author has consistently created plays that are not only smooth and shiny but written with an effect of ease and confidence which his plays on more modern themes do not usually show.

• • •

Anne of the Thousand Days adopts the conventional view that Henry's second queen was a woman of great beauty for love of whom the king, with his ministers' help, engineered the Reformation of England. Beginning with that assumption, which has always been an attractive one, Mr. Anderson exercises his poetic and private privilege of interpreting the relations of the royal lovers in his own way. Anne, he says, yielded to the king's passion under duress, with reservations of pride and hate, and ended by loving him fully. She went to her death still loving him but determined to concede nothing to his new lusts and ambitions. She was, in short, a girl of lofty mind and strong character as well as physical beauty.

This reading conflicts somewhat with that of the less romantic historians, who call her plain and flighty, and that of Shakespeare, who calls her mild, innocent, and generous. But that is beside the point. The story is now Mr. Anderson's to tell, and he tells it with eloquence and conviction. The Anne of his play is a valid person, and her portrait is further strengthened by a fine, spirited performance by Joyce Redman.

An even more surehanded and spectacular job of acting is that done by Rex Harrison as the king. Known for the most part as a light comedian, overlapping slightly into the matinee idol class, Mr. Harrison takes his place in *Anne of the Thousand Days* as a serious actor of considerable stature. Few actors in business today can read lines so clearly and intelligently. His Henry VIII is leaner and jauntier than the general run of Henrys; even so, in the interest of verisimilitude, he manages somehow as the play goes on to convey an impression of bloat, and he splays his legs in the genuine Holbein style in a very deft bit of incidental acrobatics.

You should be advised that Mr. Anderson's Henry and Anne do not "transcend" their period, as the saying goes, in such a way as to suggest an eternal reality or make a universal appeal. You ought to be interested in their special time and special history to enjoy *Anne of the Thousand Days* completely; the story of Anne Boleyn is not everyone's dish, even in repetitions as eloquent as Mr. Anderson's.

• • •

Granting this interest, though, you are bound to be struck by the honest boldness of the author's aims. He has never been afraid to attempt poetry or prose in the Elizabethan manner, and his sincerity carries him over hurdles too tall for the taste of most current playwrights. He attempts soliloquies as ambitious in scope as some of Shakespeare's (there is one by Henry in the second act of *Anne of the Thousand Days*, which calls to mind in its rhythm and use of figures the "Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back" speech of Ulysses in *Troilus* and *Cressida*.)

The minor parts in the play are mainly well written and soundly played; Mr. Anderson has taken the trouble, for instance, to make characters instead of cardboard throwaways of the alleged adulterers Norris and Smeaton, played by Allan Stevenson and John Merivale. I thought Wolsey (Percy Waram) was a little too oily and furtive, and Norfolk (John Williams) a little too thin and vague. All these people, however, form as solid a background as is necessary for the dominating figures of Mr. Harrison and Miss Redman. The set by Jo Mielziner, attuned to the episodic quality of the play by tricks and shifts of lighting, serves its purpose very well.

New York Post

DECEMBER 9, 1948

New Anderson Tragedy Aided by Rex Harrison

By RICHARD WATTS JR.

"Anne of the Thousand Days" is the latest of Maxwell Anderson's earnest, literate, worthy and somewhat earthbound chronicle plays about the sorrows of the great. This time Mr. Anderson is contemplating the brief and hapless romance, if you can call it that, of Henry VIII and his ill-fated second wife, Anne Boleyn, and he does it faithfully, conscientiously and in a fashion that struck me as too pedestrian to be exciting dramatically. With Rex Harrison offering a fine, gusty performance as the marrying monarch, the production offered last night at the Shubert is rarely dull and has moments of striking effectiveness, but it never achieves the quality of high tragedy for which it reaches.

As seems to be the custom this season, it is the performance in the leading male role which gives Mr. Anderson's play its chief merit. Mr. Harrison is an excellent actor indeed, and his Henry is a powerful, impressive and always believable portrait. He is humorous, violent, cruel, passionate and headstrong, with a bluff, hearty exterior half masking his brutal selfishness, but with the mark of a dominating personality always strong upon him. In the early scenes, the part is written with a raffish sense of comedy, and Mr. Harrison makes the humor racy and earthy without too much extravagance. In addition, he can make the role sympathetic without losing sight of the essential brutality of the man.

Factual Chronicle

The performance, I am afraid, supplies the one touch of distinction the play possesses. Mr. Anderson's chronicle sticks to the facts of the story and carries his narrative straightforwardly through Henry's courting of the reluctant Anne, his acceptance of her demand that he divorce Catharine and make her his Queen, his bitter disappointment over the birth of the girl Elizabeth, the trial of Anne for adultery and her execution. It is all there, told simply and with considerable attempt at sympathy. But there is little fire or eloquence in it, no particular insight into character or motive, and very little freshness of viewpoint. Rather flatly told, the tragedy lacks any kind of impressive dramatic significance.

It is, to tell the truth, an essentially unsympathetic sort of tragedy. Genuine eloquence or some originality of approach might have made it beautiful or properly moving, but as Mr. Anderson tells it, it is merely the conflict between a selfish, brutal, stubborn monarch and a shrill, shrewish, equally selfish woman with her own ruthless ambitions. The only heroic figures in it are Sir Thomas More and his two friends, who protest against the king's determination to make Anne his queen and are slain for their courage, and they are but minor characters, whose chief effect in the drama is to make the heroine's ruthlessness all the more unattractive. It is their death, rather than Anne's, that supplies the true drama.

Joyce Redman

It is a difficult thing to make the sad fate of the arrogant woman who is willing to send such men to their doom properly touching. Certainly it would require more fire and eloquence than the play reveals to turn "Anne of the Thousand Days" into deeply felt poetic tragedy, with the result that the drama is interesting enough as straight historical narrative without reaching any distinguished dramatic heights. Nor, I suspect, is Joyce Redman's performance as Anne any great help in capturing the needed poignancy. Miss Redman, who was so wonderful as Doll Tearsheet in the second part of "Henry IV," has some effective emotional moments, but, on the whole, she makes the girl too shrewish to be a pathetic figure.

Under H. C. Potter's vigorous direction, there are some excellent performances in the smaller parts. Percy Waram, always a fine actor, is particularly effective as the sly Cardinal Wolsey. John Williams is a skillful Duke of Norfolk, and Wendell K. Phillips is coldly impressive as the scheming Cromwell, while Russell Gaige and Harry Irvine have a good scene as the martyred Sir Thomas More and the bishop who dies with him. In fact, the entire performance is efficient and intelligent. "Anne of the Thousand Days" has dignity and loftiness of motive, but only in Mr. Harrison's central characterization does it flame into the dramatic life that it should have had.

The Sun

DECEMBER 9, 1948

By WARD MOREHOUSE

A Robust and Vivid Play.

Maxwell Anderson's "Anne of the Thousand Days" is a vivid and frequently soaring chronicle of the love and passion and fury and violence in the lives of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, a play put on last evening at the Shubert Theater by the Playwrights' Company and Leland Hayward.

If "Anne of the Thousand Days" falls somewhat short of Anderson's finest historical pieces, if it is lacking in something of the stature of "Mary of Scotland" and "Elizabeth the Queen," it does offer a robustness of its own, and it is crowded with writing that has vehemence and gusto.

There are scenes of beauty and compassion in the Shubert's new play; scenes of broad and bawdy humor and others that are detonating and fiercely played. Some of the interludes are tremendously moving, such as that when Anne, unquelled and unafraid, makes her decision to accept death at the hands of the headsman rather than to go into exile and have her daughter lose the right to succession to the throne.

Maxwell Anderson tells the story of ten gory years (1526-36) in the Tudor court in soliloquies and flashbacks. He writes in racy and stinging speech of Henry's conquest of the capricious Anne after having discarded her sister; of Anne's rejections of his offers and her defiance, and of the price that she puts upon herself—she will accept nothing less than being made Queen of England.

So, as the play goes its way unflinchingly, Henry VIII breaks with Rome, sets himself up as head of the Church of England, rids himself of Katherine of Aragon and gives Anne her queenship. But she bears him a daughter instead of the son for which he craves, and he turns to Jane Seymour. It is not long before Anne is arrested for adultery and imprisoned in the Tower. Finally, the cannon booms on the fateful sunrise; the executioner has done his work. There is a last-curtain glimpse of a subdued and introspective Henry, with blood on his quill and on his hands, and with the serene face of his Nan in his eyes and in his heart, there to remain forever.

Rex Harrison makes a genuine person of the implacable Henry VIII. His Henry is regal and commanding — brusque, vain, lusty, humorful, a ruler given to anguish, self-analysis, to strutting and to roaring, but a man who is capable and likable for all his bestiality. Joyce Redman, that brilliant young actress from England, contributes a tremulous and exciting performance as the tragic and guiltless Anne. She is magnificent in her rages, and she has variety as well as vitality, and gives beautiful readings in her quieter moments. Her best scene is undoubtedly her last, that in which she refuses to save her pretty head and thus lose succession for Elizabeth. Miss Redman has truly earned her stardom.

There are some other first-rate performances from players who have been ably directed by H. C. Potter. Percy Waram, always a good actor, is excellent as the sinister and menacing Cardinal Wolsey. Wendell K. Phillips makes the scheming Thomas Cromwell a fascinating character. Sir Thomas More, in the playing of Russell Gaige, emerges as a martyr of great dignity. There is eloquent playing from Harry Irvine as a churchman willing to die for his inability to accept Henry as his spiritual leader, and skillful characterizations from such players as Charles Francis, playing Thomas Boleyn, a man of pacification and compromises; John Williams as the Duke of Norfolk; John Merivale as the tortured Mark Smeaton; Robert Duke as the ardent and headstrong Earl of Northumberland, and George Collier as Prior Houghton. Jo Mielziner's scenery is wieldy and simple and the costumes of Motley are magnificent.

"Anne of the Thousand Days" has poetry and pageantry and it provides a stimulating and full-measure evening in the theater.

"Anne of the Thousand Days"—*continued*

NEW YORK Herald Tribune

DECEMBER 9, 1948

By HOWARD BARNES

A Dish for a King

MAXWELL ANDERSON'S new play, "Anne of the Thousand Days," is a work to be cherished. The gifted dramatist has combined eloquence and theatrical excitement superbly in his poetic reconstruction of the fateful alliance between Henry VIII and his second queen. Rex Harrison and Joyce Redman play the pivotal roles with compelling artistry, and the various collaborators on the production at the Shubert have distinguished themselves in every instance. The Jo Mielziner decor is as fluent as an obviously episodic script demanded. H. C. Potter's direction gives tremendous impact to individual scenes, and builds to an absorbing climax without sacrificing any of the beauty or meaning of the lines. Meanwhile the Motley costumes, and Lehman Engel's incidental music add enchantment to a show which makes theater-going once more a splendid adventure.

* * *

Although the strange hatred and love which Anne Boleyn bore for Henry is the substance of the drama, Anderson has been as interested in the fierce monarch who broke the English church away from Rome, and the seething unrest of the Tudor period, as he has been in his tragic heroine. "Anne of the Thousand Days" is a stately and stirring pageant of a period, as well as a rueful tale of royalty. Since Harrison's portrayal of Henry is superbly rounded and persuasive, the personal drama is always integrated with the background of epochal events. The cadence of the dialogue is irresistible without being obtrusively iamoic pentameter. The prodigality of ideas which Anderson had to voice are perfectly clothed in his scheme of dramatic construction.

* * *

There are no set designations of scenes in two acts which trace the relationship of the English monarch and the mother of Queen Elizabeth between 1526 and 1536. There are occasional flashbacks and a darkened stage to denote the passage of time when necessary. On the whole "Anne of the Thousand Days" moves with an exhilarating mental and emotional pace. It is disturbing and sometimes terrifying, but it has dimensions which are not frequently to be found in contemporary plays. Great credit must go to Mielziner and Potter for their mounting of the play, but it is Anderson who is inevitably responsible for a richly rewarding experience. His probing into the relationships between men and women is as fascinating as his description of autocratic regal power. His philosophy is as satisfying as his deft handling of melodramatic vignettes.

* * *

Miss Redman brings a fiery intensity to the title role in addition to great beauty. Her Anne is a woman one might believe would change the course of a kingdom and an empire. Her stubborn insistence on legalizing her liason with her imporiunate master is illuminating in a many-faceted performance. Her acceptance of her doom, after the star chamber trial conducted by Cromwell, is deeply moving. If Harrison's impersonation overshadows hers somewhat, it is partly because of the role. In any case, the actor blusters and meditates as Henry with complete conviction. Viola Keats, Charles Francis, Percy Waram and John Williams are some of the supporting players in a fine play. They never fail it. "Anne of the Thousand Days" is an event of the season.

"Red Gloves"

The New York Times

DECEMBER 6, 1948.

AT THE THEATRE

By BROOKS ATKINSON

Although Jean-Paul Sartre has some penetrating things to say in "Red Gloves," you would hardly suspect it from his play. Apart from Charles Boyer's acting, the exercises conducted at the Mansfield on Saturday evening looked and sounded bogus. This is an English adaptation of "Les Mains Sales," still on view in Paris. M. Sartre has been busily disavowing the American version by cable for the past ten days. Without knowing anything about the technical points at issue, it is easy to agree with him on general grounds. For "Red Gloves" is a tedious discussion of abstract arguments by cardboard characters.

* * *

Whether or not "Red Gloves" is an anti-Communist play depends upon your susceptibility to Mr. Boyer's acting. Off the screen Mr. Boyer eases some of his lush splendor and gains in candor and humanity. His portrait of Hoederer, the Communist party leader, is the one consolation for a turgid evening, and possibly throws M. Sartre's ideological play out of balance. Any time Mr. Boyer wants to set up shop on Broadway, this department will offer very little sales resistance.

Hoederer's character should not be admired by discriminating people. He is a cynical political leader, stooge for the Kremlin and party general in some middle European country, adjacent to Ruritania. He lies to the people. He is contemptuous of ideals. He is selling his followers down the river in an expeditious alliance with Fascist beasts.

* * *

But his adversary in the play is Hugo, a romantic-minded young Communist who is one of the most muddled characters of the season. Hugo has been selected by other party doctrinaires to assassinate Hoederer; and after talking about it in Boy Scout terms most of the evening, he fires three shots that are reasonably fatal.

Being no fool, M. Sartre does not offer this melodrama idly. It is savagely ironical in its planning. In the first place, Hugo actually assassinates Hoederer, not for political reasons, but for personal revenge; and, in the second place, the Communist party line changes after the assassination, and the infamous Hoederer becomes a hero and martyr. In the most fraudulent scene of the evening, Hugo grandiloquently marches off to his own execution for the last curtain.

As a matter of fact, "Red Gloves" appears to be neither pro nor anti-Communist. It is an analytical play about the intellectual evils of totalitarian political parties, written by a keen and versatile intellectual of Paris. But in the theatre the principles of the play are less important than the fact that M. Sartre talks too much to too little dramatic purpose. In "Red Gloves" he is busily tilting at windmills.

* * *

Although Hugo is an intolerable character, it is possible to admire John Dall's highly-wrought acting of the part. And although Hugo's wife is a colorless and vapid person, it is impossible not to admire Joan Tetzel's beauty. Under Jed Harris' direction, the performance gives an illusion of dealing with momentous matters, which argues sleight-of-hand of one kind or another. Stewart Chaney has designed a series of settings moldy enough to represent a course of lectures in political philosophy.

Everything about "Red Gloves" is good theatre work except the play and the characters. The one unforgivable crime that the Communists have committed against humanity is the fact that they are so boring. That has certain political advantages. But it is a practical liability in a play.

'RED GLOVES.'

Play by Jean-Paul Sartre; adaptation by Daniel Taradash. Staged by Jed Harris. Settings by Stewart Chaney. Costumes by Emeline Roche. Presented by Jean Dalrymple, by arrangement with Gabriel Pascal. At the Mansfield Theater, Saturday evening, December 4, 1948. The cast:

Reich	J. Anthony La Penna
Johanna	Anna Karen
Louise	Guy Thomajan
Monster	Horace McMahon
Hugo	John Dall
Jessica	Joan Tetzel
Marochek	Jesse White
Kirtz	Martin Kingsley
Hoederer	Charles Boyer
The Prince	Francis Compton
Karsky	Royal Beal

Synopsis: The action of the play takes place in a country in Middle Europe. Prologue—Johanna's flat. Early spring, 1945. Act I.—A room in a villa in Hoederer's courtyard. Spring, 1943. Act II.—Hoederer's quarters in an old palace, a few days later. Act III.—The same. The following morning.

Daily Mirror

DECEMBER 6, 1948

Boyer Makes Stage Bow In Sartre's 'Red Gloves'

By ROBERT COLEMAN

Charles Boyer is making his debut on the American stage in an adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Red Gloves." It is an auspicious bow from the standpoint of histrionics, though his vehicle is nothing to make you want to ring bells, dance in the streets or toss your hat in the air.

Prior to its opening at the Mansfield Saturday evening, "Red Gloves" had been the cause of considerable controversy. Author Sartre has been claiming that producer Jean Dalrymple, director Jed Harris and adaptor Daniel Taradash have played tricks with his script. Sartre's major complaint, it seems, is that his work has been turned into "an anti-Communist tract."

Discerning friends who have seen this and other Sartre plays in Paris have not been particularly impressed by the exponent of existentialism's handicraft, and producer Dalrymple vows that she has simply attempted to make the current work acceptable to American audiences, and a success at the box office.

As for Miss Dalrymple's statement, it would appear that she has been successful on the latter score, for "Red Gloves" opened at the Mansfield to an advance sale of approximately $300,000.

"Red Gloves" has to do with a wealthy young European's fascination with and eventual disillusionment by Communism. The son of an important financier, born to luxury, he espouses Marxism in a spirit of idealism. Because of the ruthlessness of the country's Communist Party leader, the "Idealist" faction of the party sends the boy to kill him.

The murder is accomplished, but the motive is the boy's mistaken notion that the strong-arm leader has had an affair with his wife.

After serving a prison term, he is shocked to learn that the man he shot has become a Communist martyr. Further, his own idealistic faction, impressed by advancing Russian army and orders from Moscow, have fallen into line. Disgusted with the lack of principle and integrity shown by his Communist associates, he willingly follows a squad of Red executioners to a welcome end.

Boyer won a spontaneous ovation from the first-nighters with his portrait of the Communist boss, willing to sacrifice scruples for power.

Harris's direction has done little to enhance the theatrical and commercial values of the weak script. So "Red Gloves" will have to depend primarily upon Boyer's magnetic appeal.

Journal American

DECEMBER 6, 1948

Boyer Is Wonderful, But Play Is Weak

By ROBERT GARLAND

Believe me, the right-minded forces of law and order haven't got a worry in the world insofar as Jean Dalrymple's presentation of Jed Harris' production of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Les Mains Sales" is concerned. They can now go back to bed and doze till doomsday.

Night before last, unaccountably translated into "Red Gloves," M. Sartre's overstressed existentialism came to the Mansfield with Charles Boyer acting handsomely in the leading role. Apart from M. Boyer's gift of greatness, America and Broadway remain as it found them.

Only a Communist, ideologically hypersensitive, could call the Daniel Taradash adaptation "pro" or "anti" anything. To you or me, it's merely a makeshift melodrama with an unpretty party leader as the pasteboard pivot around which its melodramatics automatically revolve.

In "Red Gloves," the unpretty party leader is the communistic color of his mittens. But the plotting and counter-plotting that go on beneath his nose could be going on beneath the nose of any other international gangster, be he white or blue or just plain low-down yellow.

As Englished by Mr. Taradash, he talks too much for his or his party's good. If, occasionally, he'd shut his mouth and open his eyes, he'd see the dirty hands that work almost openly against him. Maybe it's his babblative obtuseness that his fellow travelers deplore.

* * *

Keeps Going

In a melodrama, and "Red Gloves" is a melodrama with a false-faced veneer of political profundity, the story needn't make much sense as long as it keeps on going. The story of "Les Mains Sales," in English does, for the most part, manage to keep on going.

The story is that of Hoederer, a supposedly relentless party leader in a revolutionary setup. Theoretically, any end justifies his means, no matter how mean those means may be. As prompted by the avant-garde, he is a hard-boiled egg without a yoke of human kindness.

"Red Gloves" displays him as nothing of the kind. He hires a male secretary who, quite obviously, is in the bosom of the secretary's family. And, quite obviously, he plays cat to his secretary's mouse.

Then, unearthing the quite obvious revolver, he sends Mr. Mouse for a walk, permits Mrs. Mouse to woo him, and, when Mr. Mouse, returning unexpectedly, shoots his party-leader because of unmotivated jealousy, he passes out protecting his slayer with a goofy sort of gallantry.

Hoederer, the hard-boiled egg who couldn't be softer if he tried, is without a third dimension as fashioned by Daniel Taradash out of the Jean-Paul Sartre original. And that's where Charles Boyer comes riding to the rescue at the Mansfield.

* * *

Boyer Superb

M. Boyer, a high handsome actor even before he took up with the talking pictures, is superb as Hoederer. His unflattering performance is one of the actorial showpieces on today's Broadway, a tour de force if a theatergoer wants to see one.

With no help from anybody, Charles Boyer builds "Red Gloves" into a must-see here in town. If, as the melodramatics wane, the party leader begins to get away from him, the fault is M. Sartre's. Or Mr. Taradash's. Or maybe Jed Harris'.

Other than a short, sharp, princely impersonation by Francis Compton, M. Boyer's cast is entirely lacking in distinction. Mr. Harris, who has been known to pass a directorial miracle, does nothing of the kind with John Dall and Joan Tetzel as Hugo and Jessica. Especially the former.

And such directorial distractions as, say, a useless blackout curtain, phoney note-taking by Hoederer's wavering young secretary, and the irritating on-and-off-ness of the wavering young secretary's wavering young wife are, as casually chosen examples, hurtful.

Even Stewart Chaney's once-was exciting scenery now lets M. Boyer down in the big bomb-throwing episode where, on the road, Mr. Compton used to sit and shine. . . . I'm sorry, but the star is the one good reason for going to see "Red Gloves." Welcome to Broadway, Charles Boyer. You're great!

New York World-Telegram

DECEMBER 6, 1948

'Red Gloves' Probes Political Fanaticism

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

"Red Gloves" is a provocative sort of drama that occurs far too rarely for the theater's own good. This is a wisely stated play and a deeply ironical one. Its forceful emotional impact is derived from purely intellectual content, and to achieve its most stimulating effects it demands exhaustive concentration from the spectator.

Concerning Communism specifically, its broad intent is to reveal the abnormal, amoral dedication of the fanatic revolutionist.

In a central European country about to be invaded by Russian armies toward the close of the war, a young party member is assigned to assassinate the party leader, Hoederer, who is about to compromise with other political factions in setting up a new peacetime government.

Wife Can't Understand.

This youthful Hugo has come from a wealthy aristocratic family, and has accepted his bloody duty largely because he wants to prove his loyalty to the party. His wife Jessica cannot understand his conviction that he must kill people who disagree with him.

In the play's most intense scene, Hoederer tries to explain to Hugo why the political compromise is a timely necessity. Instead of overcoming Hugo's hatred of the people he would deal with, Hoederer inspires adoring hero worship in Jessica. She betrays Hugo, who must then admit that he has not a killer's instinct. Only when he suspects Hoederer of having an affair with Jessica, can Hugo summon the violent passion to kill him.

After a prison term he comes out to find that it has proven expedient for the party to make Hoederer a martyr. Hugo must admit that he had acquired deep admiration for the man.

When he finds that the party is now following the exact program to prevent which he had committed murder, Hugo goes to his own death in utter disillusionment, as useless now to the party as he is to himself.

Charles Boyer Superb.

The principal point Sartre is making is that to succeed in the pursuit of any violent artificial revolution, a man must deny every decent human instinct he has. Here in striking contrast are the vacillating Hugo, impassioned but mortally limited, and Hoederer, who has stamped out of his soul any personal flexibility and any need except for his ultimate political goal.

Charles Boyer is giving a superb performance as the martyred leader. The calm irresistible drive of the man exudes from him as a live force. Like the play itself, Boyer's acting is shorn of compromise and nonessentials.

It is a long role and a subtle one. This is a character of heroic size whose influence lies in the purity of his dedication. Boyer plays him as the great sophisticate of his calling that he must be. It is terrifyingly clear how with his innate charm and unsullied conviction, he might lead a person away from his most sacred loyalties.

The tantalizing richness of Sartre's theme here lies in the basic stature of this man, and Boyer gives him the infallible quality of magnitude as a leader.

Dall's Effects Strained.

Perhaps it is the very solidity and assurance of Boyer's acting that sometimes makes John Dall's effects in the role of Hugo seem strained. It is a tortured character, a dreamer fighting the irresolution that makes him remain a theorist. It might seem that the personalized final motive for his shooting Hoederer is an influence extraneous to the main theme. Actually it strengthens the picture of this harassed boy, who in the end is never quite sure exactly why he pulled the trigger.

The Sun

DECEMBER 6, 1948

By WARD MOREHOUSE

Slipshod Play . . . Fine Performance.

"Red Gloves," which has created more pre-Broadway commotion than anything offered hereabouts since Michael Arlen's "The Green Hat," brought the town's eager and somewhat skeptical playgoers piling down upon the Mansfield Theater Saturday evening. Jean-Paul Sartre, separated from all the hullabalioo by a convenient ocean, remained quietly in the Rue Bonaparte and the proceedings in Forty-seventh street went along without molestation.

"Red Gloves," as played upon the Mansfield's stage, is a slipshod melodrama that is turned into a fairly effective theatrical piece by the hypnotic playing of Charles Boyer. He gives a truly fascinating performance as the party leader suspected of treason, who dies from an assassin's bullet, and as a martyr to a cause.

This new play, changed or unchanged, mutilated or not in the Jed Harris-Jean Dalrymple-Daniel Taradash version, is a play of political intrigue in middle Europe, and one in which Communism is never mentioned. It is a melodrama of ideas and it is frequently more declamatory than it is dramatic. "Red Gloves" is not a play of any sustained drive, and a device out of the oldtime, villain-unhand-her school of melodrama is used to bring about its resolving situation. But there are moments of great tension, these to be attributed to the playing and the underplaying of Charles Boyer—to the suavity, the believeability, the magnetism and the complete finesse that this Frenchman brings to his first performance in the New York theater.

The story of "Red Gloves" is, briefly, that of the irresolution of a young intellectual, a boy of wealthy background, as he seeks to bring himself to the killing of the party leader. The agonized and self-tormented Hugo never finds the courage, or the will, to go through with his assignment until he suspects that the wily Hoederer has seduced his wife. It is then that he pulls the trigger. Hugo, bitter and completely disillusioned, goes to his own death as the play comes to its ironical conclusion.

"Red Gloves," adroitly directed by Jed Harris, and encased in Stewart Chaney's effective scene designs, is at its best in the scene in which the party leader, a practical politician, succeeds in taking the gun from the would-be killer, and at its worst when the young revolutionary's pretty wife tells the doomed leader that she loves him. It's a declaration that is somewhat jolting in its suddenness.

Jean Dalyrymple and Jed Harris have put some interesting players into the Mansfield's new play. Joan Tetzel brings force and excitement and sincerity to her playing as the young wife. There's good work from Francis Compton, from Anna Karen and Jesse White, who gave over quite a portion of his lifetime to the role of the rambunctious hospital attendant in "Harvey." I found it difficult, however, to accept, or to believe, the performance of John Dall as the revolutionary, who is frequently an absurd figure in his jumpy ways and his Hamlet-like broodings.

"Red Gloves" is claptrap melodrama that becomes moderately stimulating theatrical fare when Charles Boyer is commanding its scenes.

NEW YORK
Herald Tribune
DECEMBER 6, 1948

By HOWARD BARNES

Little Impact

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S "Red Gloves," which has opened at the Mansfield with Charles Boyer in the starring role, is a garrulous and rarely provocative study of revolutionary tactics. The French existentialist is essayist rather than dramatist in the Daniel Taradash adaptation of his latest work. Although Boyer brings vigor and magnetism to the chief part and Jed Harris has employed all his directorial cunning on the production, it is a plodding show. When it lights up theatrically, it is for the most specious reasons. The conflict of a ruthless underground leader with a high-born idealist who has been appointed to assassinate him might have been made the subject of a tensile and trenchant drama. As it stands, there is not even justification for the controversy that has arisen over the propagandistic bias of the piece.

* * *

Boyer's first stage appearance here is the chief reason to applaud "Red Gloves." Looking more like Mussolini than the "party" chief of a country in Middle Europe, he packs power into scenes which have little eloquence and almost no dramatic excitement. In the few moments of superior play writing that are evident he rises to genuine acting heights. His duel of wits with a would-be killer before he takes away his gun is a triumphant job of portraiture. Unfortunately, John Dall does not match his artistry in the role of the assassin. There is perplexity and obvious anguish without real persuasion in his characterization of the baron's son, torn between philosophical and practical methods of forming a new society. Since he finally shoots the leader for unfounded reasons, it is not entirely Dall's responsibility for a lame portrayal.

* * *

Joan Tetzel, in the other featured role, has an equally bad time of it. As the naive wife of the idealistic gunman, she has a certain warmth and sincerity, particularly when she informs on the fellow with full confidence that his life will be spared. When she becomes entangled in the preposterous romance that has been tossed in to give the work some final direction she blunders badly. Sartre has given few of his characters honest and appealing definition. For three acts, a prologue and an epilogue he has kept them talking endlessly about complicated differences of procedure in seizing and holding power in a land caught between the jaws of Nazi Germany and the U. S. S. R.

* * *

Harris has done wonders with an inactive script. Even when he has had to direct a round-table discussion between leaders of rival parties, in which Francis Compton distinguishes himself as a prince schooled in compromise, he has kept the proceedings fluent. He must have been delighted when he had the chance to stage a noisy bomb explosion or the final assassination. The Stewart Chaney settings give him scope. They are properly authoritative. There is no lack of painstaking production in "Red Gloves." It is still a wearisome play, saved in part by Boyer's handsome acting.

NEW YORK STAR
DECEMBER 6, 1948

by John Lardner

M. Boyer and the Proletariat

After perceiving, perhaps with a touch of chargin, that there would be no French process-servers charging down the aisles in behalf of Jean-Paul Sartre, to enjoin Jean Dalrymple and Jed Harris from artistic sabotage against the master's famous play *Red Gloves* (*Les Mains Sales*), the first-night audience at the Mansfield Saturday settled back to be entertained nonlitigiously by the play itself—that is, what Miss Dalrymple, producer, insisted was the play itself, with only minor adjustments by Daniel Taradash, adapter.

I should say that the audience was entertained well. At any rate, I was. Not having read *Red Gloves* in the original, or seen it under one name nor another in London or Paris, I cannot tell how significant the adjustments are, but the new version struck me as a stimulating and satisfactory show in M. Sartre's tastiest style of philosophical melodrama.

It is well acted too, in the main, by a cast headed by Charles Boyer, for whom the proletariat whooped it up at the final curtain of his Broadway debut Saturday until his portrait shook. Mr. Boyer's portrait, I should add, occupies the left rear wall of the stage in the last scene. On the right rear wall is a portrait of Lenin.

You probably know from the newspapers that the current *Red Gloves*, as mothered by Miss Dalrymple and staged by Mr. Harris, aroused profound suspicion, sight unseen, in the bosom of M. Sartre back in Paris. Why Miss Dalrymple wouldn't let the man see her shooting script, I don't know. Maybe she is guiltier than I think. Be that as it may, the gist of the author's suspicion was that his play had been twisted into an explicitly red-baiting form here—to suit the country's taste in plays, pictures, and comic strips, if not in congressmen—which he never intended it to have.

Without this hint, I doubt if it would occur to anyone to set down the new *Red Gloves* as "anti-Communist." It has the appearance of a valid examination of the moods and philosophies of revolutionary movements; of the conflict within such movements between the intellectual idealist and the working politician.

In a "country in Middle Europe," in 1943, when Russia rather than Germany is beginning to look like the winner, the local Communist party assigns a young recruit of aristocratic background to assassinate the party's national leader before he can complete a coalition with more conservative groups. The recruit (John Dall) funks the job until he is able to persuade himself that the leader (M. Boyer) is having an affair with the young man's wife (Joan Tetzel). This makes the killing ostensibly a crime of passion instead of an act of politics, and it also makes of the leader a martyr whose picture goes up on Communist walls alongside Lenin's.

Now, as the story is told at the Mansfield, there is irony in the fact that the compromises for which Hoederer (Boyer) is ordered shot become, only two years later, the official party line indorsed by those who ordered his death. It would be easier to take this point as "anti-Communist" if the same irony had not occurred regularly in the history of royalist and parliamentary parties, too. My guess is that nearly all of the ironies, and plot factors, of the Dalrymple *Red Gloves* were a part of the Sartre *Red Gloves* to begin with.

The play is neatly and strongly contrived, except for the part of the young wife, which is weak and ordinary, though nicely played by Miss Tetzel, and serves merely to account for the plot device of the *crime passionel*. Also, her husband, the converted aristocrat, the play's principal problem child, seems almost incredibly callow and hysterical; but it should be remembered in his favor that continental fiction, including Dostoevsky's, is full of such types. If this one, against the play's powerful context, occasionally looks too trivial to be true, I should say that it is less the fault of Mr. Dall than of the author (or authors).

M. Boyer, unflawed by Hollywood, is highly effective and perfectly at home with the intelligent prose of M. Sartre and the pleasingly sinister direction of Mr. Harris. The only objection I can make to his performance is one sometimes raised by male movie-goers, namely, that he talks a little too much as though he had a hot pomme de terre in his mouth. That isn't so good, acoustically. Nearly all the other players are competent, and Francis Compton, in particular, as an elderly king's son and practising politician, makes the most of a fine opportunity. I am glad Miss Dalyrymple is showing *Red Gloves* to us, though I still think she should have shown it to the author first, just for luck.